Race in the 21st Century
Ecumenical Racial Justice Conference Guest Speakers Bio's

The Rev. Dr. Davena L. Jones is the Conference Minister for the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ, the regional organization for our denomination. Davena began as Associate Conference Minister in November 2015, and was installed as the 6th Settled, 1st African American Woman Conference Minister in November 2023. She is a longtime member of Pilgrim Community Church (UCC), San Francisco, with her husband who is a Deacon in the congregation. A graduate of Pacific School of Religion. Davena received her Doctorate IN Theological Seminary, May 2024, with her dissertation project "Resources for Churches Around Intimate Partner Violence."

The Rev. Dr. Toni Dunbar is a bi-vocational urban pastor, a post-secondary instructor and lecturer in progressive social ministry, a visionary mentor/manager, with strong experience and interests in nonprofit development, networking, communication and collaboration; a grant writer and AI enthusiast; a Youth Mental Health First Aid instructor, teaching caring adults how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis; a former Special Education Instructional Aid at Richmond College Prep Schools (WCCUSD), and former Registered Behavioral Technician (RBT) who implemented Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) programs with children with autism and other disabilities. Recently, Pacific School of Religion gave me the inestimable honor of being chosen a Distinguished Alumnus.

Rev. Rhina Ramos is an ordained Associate Conference Minister of Racial Justice for the Northern California Nevada Conference,United Church of Christ. Rev. Rhina Ramos is also a United Church of Christ minister leading Ministerio Latino, a Spanish speaking open and affirming congregation for LGTBQI Latine immigrants founded as her call to be ordained in 2011. Rhina was born in El Salvador and emigrated to the United States at age 14 in 1983. She graduated from Hofstra University Law School in 1995 and was a labor attorney for five years recuperating thousands of dollars in unpaid wages for immigrant workers. In 2003, she obtained a Masters in Divinity from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA. Pastor Rhina has worked in the nonprofit sector for over 25 years as an activist, community organizer and leader. She published her first book "In my heart, a volcano" in Spanish about her family and memories of growing up in El Salvador during the 80's.

Dr. Arturo Baiocchi is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at California State University California, Sacramento (CSUS). He also holds a position as a Faculty Fellow at the Institute for Social Research at CSUS. Teaches courses in Social Work and Sociology related to Social Theory, Statistics, Program Evaluation, and Poverty and Homelessness. Interested in mixed-methods, mental health, social welfare, foster care and services/programs for vulnerable populations.

Doctoral dissertation in Sociology at the University of Minnesota was a study of young adults aging out of the foster care system and their attitudes toward service providers and the challenges they face as they transition to adulthood.

Rev. Deborah Lee has been part of the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, and in 2018, she assumed the role of Executive Director. With over 30 years dedicated to the intersection of faith and social justice, Rev. Deborah Lee brings expertise in various realms, including popular education, community organizing, and advocacy. Her commitment is evident in her multifaceted engagement with issues such as race, gender, economic justice, anti-militarism, LGBTQ inclusion, and immigrant rights and abolition.

Rev. Deborah Lee has worked at the intersection of faith and social justice for over 30 years in popular education, community organizing and advocacy connecting issues of race, gender, economic justice, anti-militarism, LGBTQ inclusion and immigrant rights. She has consistently sought to strengthen the voice and role of faith communities in today's social movements. Through the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI), she has helped build a network of 250 congregations, 2000 faith leaders and 250 community partners committed to immigrant justice and ending mass incarceration. IM4HI has helped create a network of congregations in California to create post-release networks of support for migrant youth and families, and to defend those targeted by detention and deportation. Her organization also led efforts to close the West County Detention Facility in 2018 and has been integral to successful campaigns to pass local and state laws to protect immigrants from detention and deportation, and most recently to ban private prisons and detention centers in the state of California. The organization plays a key role in fighting for decarceration in Southern California and saving lives of those detained and incarcerated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Director Andrew Yang M.A.has an extensive experience spanning higher education, assessment, community work, philanthropy, enrollment, and sponsorships fundraising, I bring a skill set that drives impact and creates positive change. My experience in student affairs, community outreach, program management, team management, enrollment initiatives, fundraising campaigns, and community-based programs has given me a deep understanding of partnership building to support the growth and development of individuals and communities. I am always seeking out new ways to leverage my skills to achieve results and bring meaningful impact.

Rev. Karen Sapio, pastor and head of staff for Claremont Presbyterian Church for over 18 ½ years. Rev. Karen Sapio, is now the Executive Presbyter for North Central California Presbytery, has been such a faithful leader for her church and her presbytery. Rev.Karen's pastoral gifts include creativity, love of music, preaching, dependability, & care.